SERAPHIM NO. 5

THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED TO

AL WILLIAMSON...

FOR HIS FINE CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMICS

Seraphim #5 is what you are holding in your hands. Hold on to it...it may be the last issue...unless you can get your friends to order. The sales have been low, despite the fact that it is crammed with never before published art by the greatest pros around. It would have been nice to publish the Williamson cover in color...or to have more pages...but it's impossible. This is all that there could be with the small amount of support that I had. But, I'm proud of it, proud of the material which lies on these pages, and rather than thank each contributor one by one, I thank you all.

I would like to hear everyones comments on this issue, so write. There may be another issue someday, but it might not be for another year, or two years or maybe even longer. So don't order just yet, wait until you see an ad. The print run of this issue was cut to 500. If this issue only pays for itself, there will be another, but if it loses any money this will be the last you will see of Seraphim. I may be a great fan, but I won't go on with a project that can't support itself.

I hope that you enjoy the material on these pages, and I thank you for ordering. Write and let me know what you think of it.

Yours,

Tom Veilleux

Tom Veilleux
42 Sterling St.
Waterville, Maine 04901

On the following pages you will find a portfolio of drawings by Bernie Wrightson. Bernie is probably the best new thing that has come around since EC. His work has graced the pages of many DC magazines, and will soon appear in Marvel comics. His stories are very graphic, reminiscent of the old EC's. He has also done work for Web of Horror, a fine new magazine, as well as many fan publications, such as Spa Fon,Squa Tront, and Graphic Showcase.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, Bernie. I know how busy you are, and how time consuming a thing like this can be - especially when there is no pay. I know that the readers appreciate your gesture, of lending a helping hand, as much as I do.

Thanks -

Tom Veilleux

WRIGHTSON
'70

"Conan"

WRIGHTSON
'70

WRIGHTSON
'70

IT'S A MAD, MAD, MAD, MAD,

MAD

BY BILL PARENTE

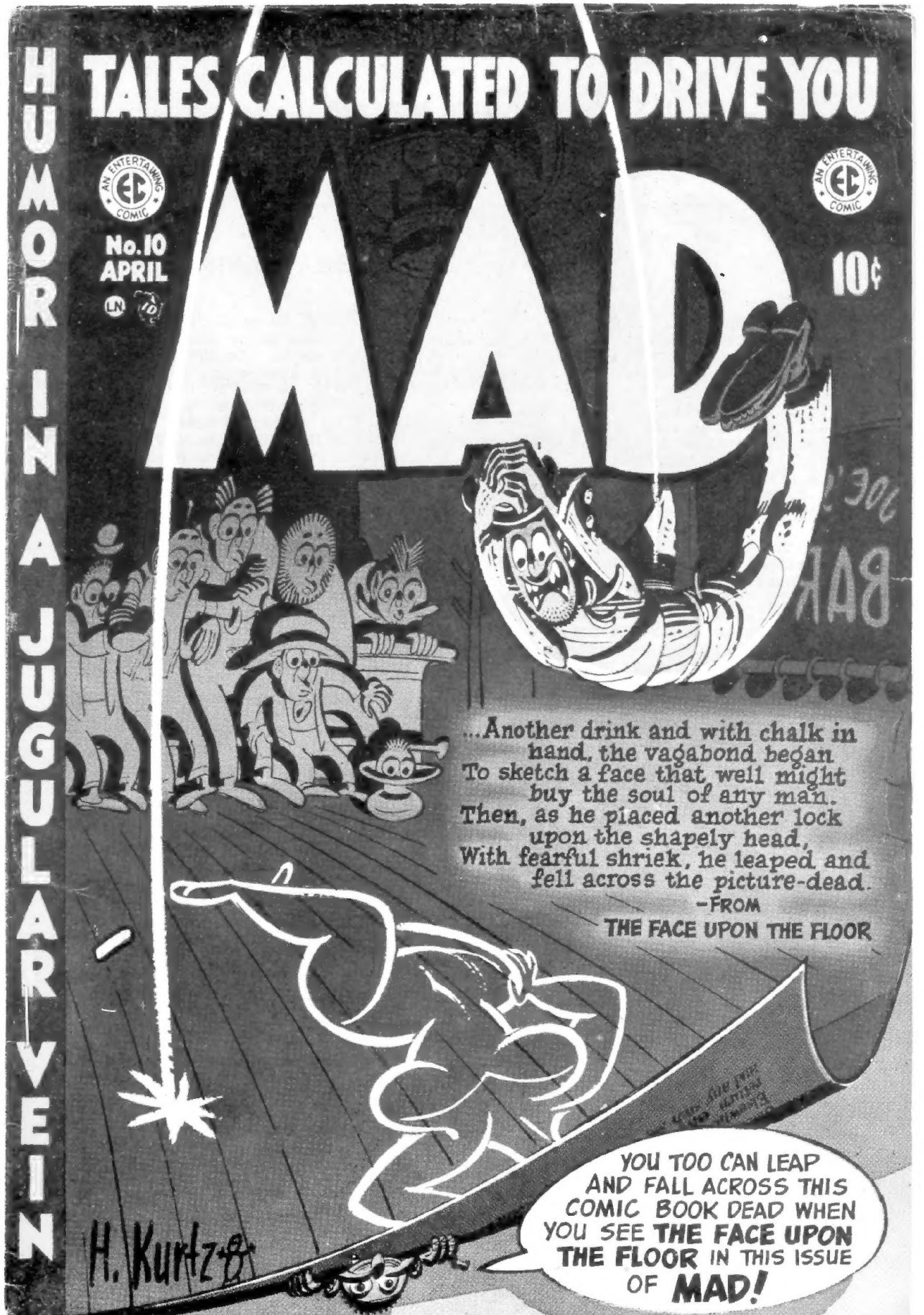
Just as today, it has become "camp" or "pop-artish" to profusely "burlesque" the various mediums of comic art, with the arrival of the super age in 1938, gradually the vogue shifted and it became stylish NOT to be "funny". By mid 1940, the satirical comic strip borrowed from the daily newspaper, no longer represented the interests of the COMIC BOOK enthusiast. A company publishing ..."DETECTIVE COMICS"...by creating their own characters had seen to that, and suddenly "Mutt and Jeff" seemed...silly. "Bringing Up Father" hardly matched the soaring adventures of "SUPERMAN" and poor "Donald Duck"...well...to remain faithful to his kind of humor sort of insisted adolescences upon the reader. "Nix on that" cried the little kid in knickers...what he santed was action...adventure... it seemed this "SUPERMAN" had showered upon the youth of a nation the unmatched fury of his fable. The comic book was growing up.

Gradually the word "comic" reminded the reader of an origin which since, had developed into a medium of many subjects. Soon the pure form of illogical media (funny bunnies and mighty mice) had been replaced by the more efficient extremes of "SUPERMAN" and his hundreds of photostatic peers. A new form of comic book language had began to speak and before long, the comic book was hardly that. And while logic had never been an ingredient essential to that form of entertainment, it was assumed that...irrationality...prompted into seeming "believable", might provide more interest in what the reader saw. This theory more than proved itself for the next ten years while the super hero era dominated the market, until, eventually it tarnished beneath the volume of mass repetition,..mute plots and frustrated cliches'.

This fading image inspired W.M. Gaines of I.C. Publishing Co. to revise a portion of his comic line, early in 1950. He was playing the game of chance and his cards...the "NEW TREND" released into posterity, the tidal popularity of the EC comic. For the first time, the full power of the logical/illogical comic book, exposed a fantasy that was "believable"...for Gaines it was a pat hand and in less than two years, EC rocketed to staggering success.

In 1952, when Al Feldstein approached W.M. Gaines with an idea for another title, "International Comics Publishing Co."by then had nine, major EC publications on the stands. In addition to their original, re-titled "NEW TREND" giants..."VAULT OF HORROR", "TALES FROM THE CRYPT", "HAUNT OF FEAR", "WEIRD SCIENCE", and "WEIRD FANTASY"...the"gang downtown" had come up with two, brilliant battle mags ("TWO FISTED TALES" AND "FRONTLINE COMBAT") and twin suspense shockers. One of those practically bore that very title. Since their introduction, EC had established themselves as a "David", in the goliath staticism of the industry. Still, the "Entertaining Comics Group" had not yet reached the phenomenal peak attained during '53 and '54, so while Feldstein's gimmick was clever, nothing further was said.

The dye had been cast. Although Gaines had recognized the potential of Feldstein's suggestion, he considered it a bit to unique to be practical... a little to revolutionary to be risked. Feldstein had considered the logic... could the tiny company support a possible fizzle if the fuse went out? The idea was folded between the manilla filled cabinets at EC, and "PANIC" lost the chance to become the legendary piece of the EC puzzle that remains with us today. Ironic that "MAD" which did eventually gain that honer, would one day be edited by Feldstein, instead of Kurtzman, "MAD's" creator. And so while Al Feldstein's contribution remained a myth no less brilliant than Harvey Kurtzman's was to become, destiny had selected "MAD" to carry the tradition of EC into drawing board history.


HUMOR IN A JUGULAR VEIN
TALES CALCULATED TO DRIVE YOU
MAD
AN ENTERTAWING COMIC
No. 10
APRIL
10¢
...Another drink and with chalk in hand, the vagabond began
To sketch a face that well might buy the soul of any man.
Then, as he placed another lock upon the shapely head,
With fearful shriek, he leaped and fell across the picture-dead.
-FROM
THE FACE UPON THE FLOOR
H. Kurtzman
YOU TOO CAN LEAP AND FALL ACROSS THIS COMIC BOOK DEAD WHEN YOU SEE THE FACE UPON THE FLOOR IN THIS ISSUE OF MAD!

It was Harvey Kurtzman who remembered that a reverse in the then current (1938-1949) "illogical age", had ignited the fuse to a spectacular explosion for the EC enterprises. Through an ingenious ability to realize a change of pace, EC had turned the tables and started a revolution in thinking. Kurtzman felt the time had come again...reverse the trend. This time he insisted, there would be no need to make "waves"while the EC frigate sailed smoothly through the waters of prosperity...just a small ripple would do. And again, unlike Gaines who had Played an "ace in the hole"...Kurtzman chose to deal a wild card...kind of a joker you might say.

So it was, late in 1952 as EC struggled toward a zenith, editor-writer-artist Kurtzman anticipated his little bombshell. He had always been an astute student of satire...his "Hey Look" strip more than exemplified that flair for comedy. Even the serious panel work he did (VAULT OF HORROR"..."WEIRD SCIENCE" ...etc.), solidly reflected the influence of his feeling in his art. Now he directed his own ideas toward a style he felt would revolutionize the entire comic book industry. Kurtzman knew that Gaines had been toying with the idea of publishing what he called, a "comic" comic book. The appeal of such a step struck Harvey as a phenomenal source of untapped entertainment. He decided it would be better to communicate his feelings through the medium of his thoughts; the drawing board. Kurtzman decided to approach the problem of creating a new title with some attitudes that formerly had accelerated EC to the head of the class.

A deffinite pattern had to be established...since in any case the solution was the same; success. The "Mad" comic book in the mind of Harvey Kurtzman came to life in a fantastic array of unbeatable "Phases". Before the "Mad" of Kurtzman's dreams could come true, every precaution had to be taken to guarantee his "baby" wouldn't end up flat on it's funny face. With the signal to go ahead with his project from Bill Gaines, Harvey turned "Mad" into the object of a fantastic promotional campaign.

His first step was to develop a character type who would, without question, instantly associate the name of his book with it, Harvey recalled the worth of that principle so aptly exercised in a book intitled "ACTION COMICS". As that first crazy issue of "Mad" began to draw itself onto the boards at EC, an image began to evolve.

"Melvin" assumed as an identity, the entire personality of "Mad" as a unit, and while he had no accurate association throughout the entire first issue (cleverly allowing the reader the decision of picking the best suited), the idea succeeded in building the total concept of what "Mad" was. It was the "Melvin" faction around which the initial formula of the "Mad" comic book was built... Kurtzman was to introduce his "characterization" on the classical cover of issue #1, supremely delivered by the small boy, standing uninhibited before his frightened parents, a tiny finger poked comfortably into one nostril.

Step by step, Kurtzman sought to set a precedent...a focal point through which the reader would clearly see the "Mad" medium. In less than one year after it's debut, and no less than seven imitations would dot the market, the value of that precedent would serve as the final decision when a choice between books had to be made. Now the second phase began to take shape...another academic gimmick designed to insure public recognition. The publicity within the publication technique...yet done with the reader's enjoyment in mind.

Now Kurtzman applied the "key" word or "catch phrase" to the growing pile of sketches and ideas. Another link in the chain binding publisher and public together. Harvey unwrapped the second sequence of slap-stick comedy in his next bag of tricks. Appropriately enough it was the title of the first "Mad" story;

"HOOHAH"...pure Kurtzman...pure "madness"...besides being pure business in subtly indicating that constant regard for identity. Just as the personality factor (Melvin) changed many times after "Mad" was born (finally established as a definite image..."Melvin of the Apes") so also could the catch phrase assume many deffinitions...altered to suit the reader with one purpose in mind; the maximum growth of the association factor.

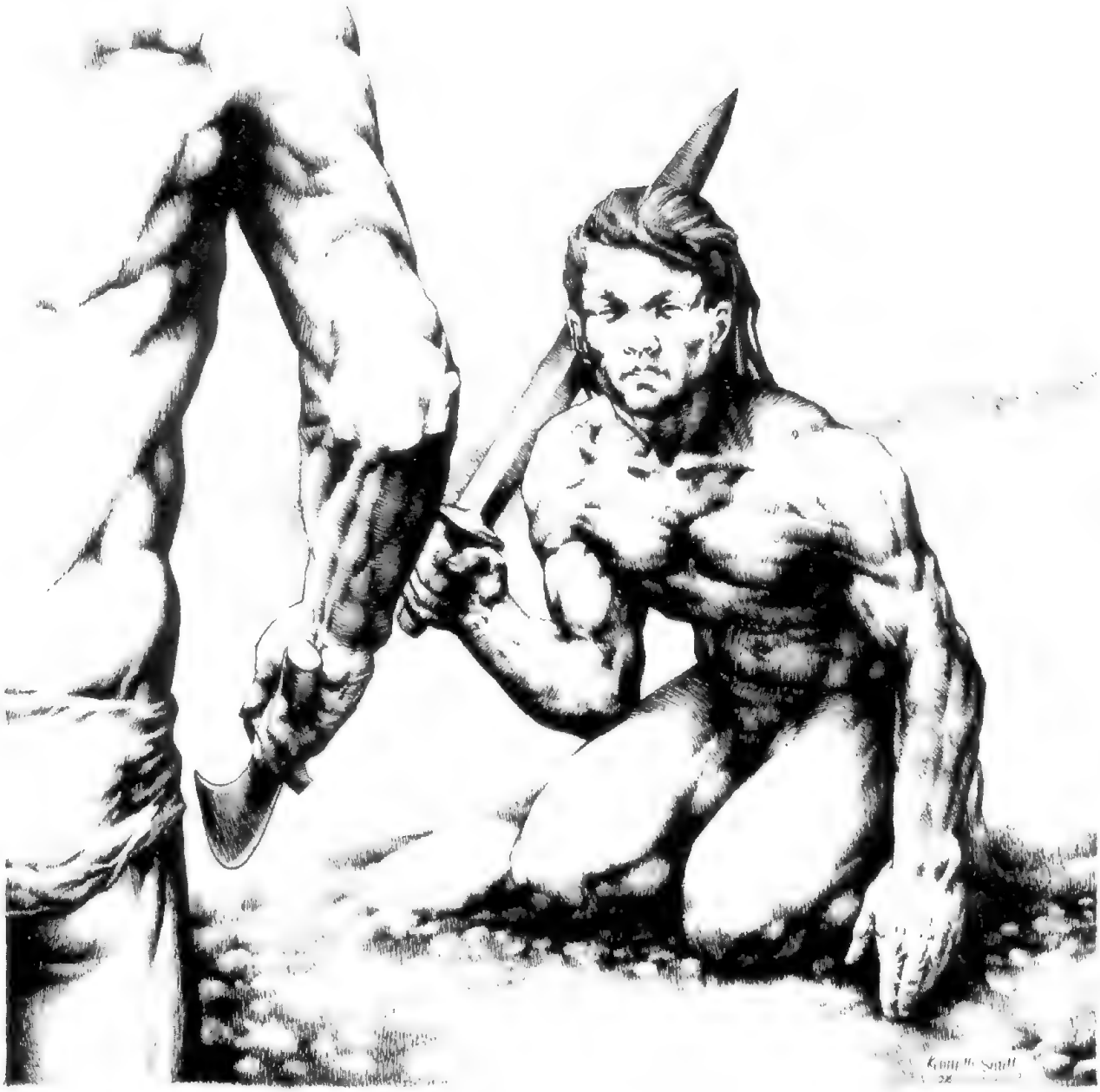
Finally if not the most effective, certainly the wittiest principle was added as the last banner to a wild parade of parody. Although Kurtzman was not solely responsible for the originating method known as the "intentional fault", in "Mad" he was able to utilize the trick to the fullest. In the past EC had always been keenly aware of perfection, any deviation seemed to them a flaw. In "Mad" of course, imperfection was not only desirable, it was almost an expected neccesity found in amass characature, standard. Ultimitely then... we had the intentional fault. Kurtzman did not begin this step in the "Mad" movement until issue #4, which then continued in a variety of forms, but in "Mad" #5 (which was almost removed altogether from retail market outlets due to what some called an "extremely gruesome cover") there is a classic example of the intentional fault. The lead story "OUTER SANCTUM" contained one such fault on page two, the sixth panel. A character..."Ramon" (who looks suspiciously like "Melvin Mole" in Kurtzmsn's second issue, once again evolutionizing the "Melvin" factor) discovers what he calls a..."frightening, horrible, awful book", announcing that it is "CRYPT OF TERROR" comic book...issue number 7, Jul-aug. Of course the alert EC reader realized that no such book existed, since "CRYPT OF TERROR" began with #17 and was published April-May of 1950. Naturally the "Mad" fan zipped off a letter to the "embarrassed" editor who, either "apoligized for the mistake or substantiated it with a witty rebuttal. This sort of thing became a kind of game between Kurtzman and the readers, repeatedly bringing a deluge of mail from happy "mistake" hunters who congratulated themselves at their awareness. For Harvey, besides a mountain of envelopes, this witty device accumulated a pile of vocal and visual attention . He was "Mad" alright... like a fox.

This then was the outline for that first bundle of buffoonery...Kurtzman had unveiled the statue of his wit and this, coupled with the familiar EC attributes...fine artwork...intense regard for entertainment...the sure fire effect of the "Snap" ending..."Mad" would surely be a superb work of art. Kurtzman had choosen Jack Davis, Wally Wood, Will Elder, and John Severin (Severin's work appeared in nine issues of "Mad" and then dropped out) to support the mold of his kooky mind. "Mad" was to be the absolute in satire, heavily jellied with the sweet humor of Elder in "GANEFS"...or executed with a snide tweak of psychology by Wally Wood in "BLOB"...both in that zany, sero hour issue. Indeed for Will Elder, so noted for his artistic dexterity throughout each succeeding issue of "Mad" did he become, eventually an entire issue ("Mad" #22) would be devoted to him.

For Harvey Kurtzman, October 1952 meant a leap from the cliff of chance... would the jump bring him fame or folly? One wonders what thoughts went through his mind as he watched his little portfolio of lampoonery take those first shakey steps into cartooning history. He was to learn that his "Mad" had inspired another "new trend" for EC...by pumping the sagging fibres of the comic industry full of frest vitality.

Ironically, while the tradition EC aparked remains a memory of a society whose sour judgement fermented a sweet ideal, EC survives today in the pages of what began as the least of it's medium; the "Mad" comic book! The story of that tiny molehill is still being told today by more than 1,500,000 readers who define "Mad" as an atlas of "wit-erature", accepting without fault, it's pointed caricature of society. Even then, the "funny" comic book extended the legs of an idea only EC was capable of, and in doing, lead an entire dynasty into the gigantic footsteps of a new era. "Mad" taught the people who created it how to laugh ...at themselves...and at the spite of a culture which first condemned, and then immortalized it. Yet in those first whimpers of existence, "Mad" almost never was...if not for a flaw in fate...an incident which would forever impress the name of "Mad" into our culture history of literature. But in October 1952... all this was a mere whisper...slightly more than a hint to the rear of the legend...which one day would be "MAD-enning"!

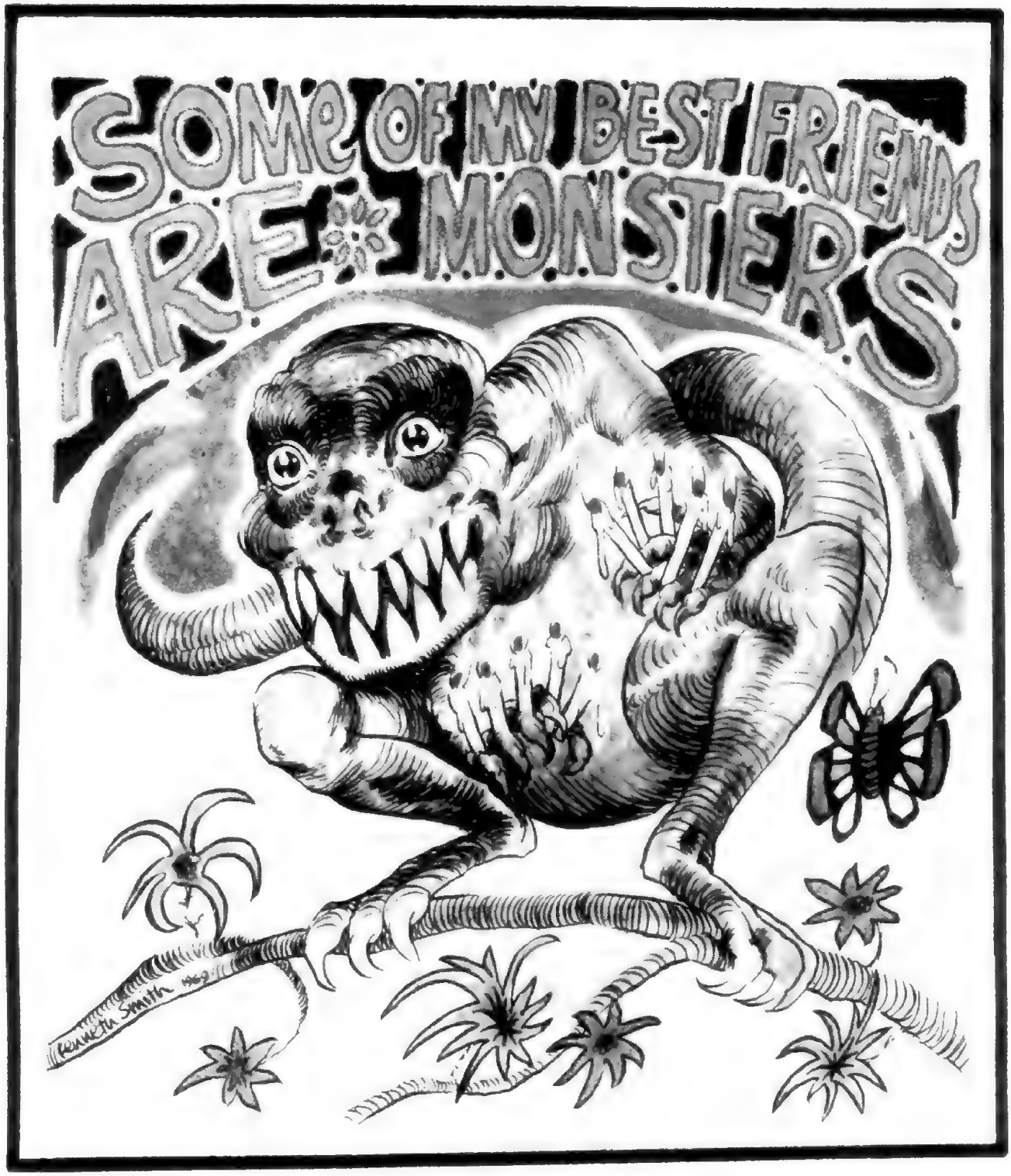
SERAPHIM.
J.JONES



My first published fiction was a prize-winning story in 1960 which has been printed in five places now. My first published artwork was cartoons, mostly political, in my high school paper, but in 1962 I began doing them for the Texas Observer and in 1963-4 I illustrated the literary journal Triad. I published a short story in Fantasy + Science Fiction (July 1963) and occasionally I remember wanting to write my third novel, this one, hopefully, readable. Recently I've published art in SQUA TRONT 3, SPA FON 5, ANOMALY 1, and SERAPHIM 4. More to come in these zines and in WITZEND, GRAPHIC SHOWCASE, and the Burroughs Bulletin. Before long one of my oils may appear on a Warren Publication.

Kenneth Smith
7 July 1969

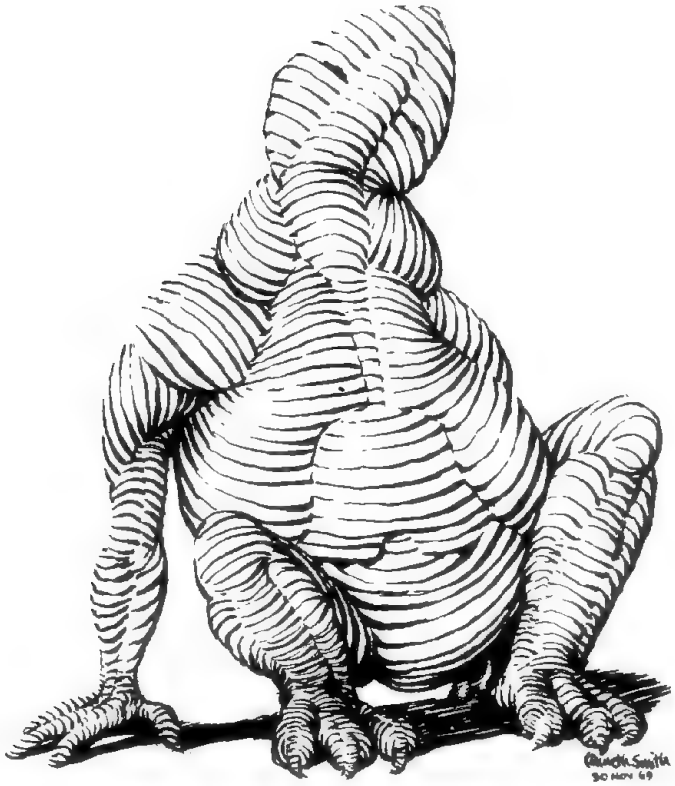
Kenneth Smith
29 JANUARY 1964



Born 8 December, 1943, in Austin, I graduated from the University of Texas in 1966 in philosophy and married my wife Angela the next day. I'm currently enrolled in the Ph.D. program in philosophy at Yale, so we now reside in New Haven with a pair of Siamese cats and 9 million books. Our firstborn should arrive the beginning of 1970.

Kenneth Smith
1 December 1969

Kenneth Smith
28 July 1969


30 NOV 69

Kenneth Smith
3 December 1969

Kenneth Smith
8 OCTOBER 1969

Kenneth Smith

ROY G. KRENKEL

Although he is not considered as a major contributor to EC, Roy Krenkel did play a major part in the success of the company. His work was on the side lines, working closely with Al Williamson, and occasionally Frank Frazetta and Al Feldstein. Many times things were done in a reverse fasion, with Al Williamson drawing in all the figures and Roy drawing appropriate backgrounds around them. Of these backgrounds, the ones that come to mind are the fantastic futuristic cities and exotic jungles. Although it is not too well known, he was a major part of the organization known as EC.

I think that if you'll find a copy of Flash Gordon #1 by Al Williamson, you'll find the title of the city quite interesting - Krenkelium!

Roy also did some fantastic work on the Burroughs books. He illustrated many of the Canaveral Press hardbounds, as well as many of the Ace paperback editions. He is a fine illustrator, as fine as any other around.

You will find the following things in the portfolio on the following pages-

The title page consists of a small watercolor - a prelim for a pellucidar illustration. The sketch of the warrior in the corner was done on the back of the painting.

This is followed by various sketches of warriors, a Pellucidar pen study, an illustration for a pulp magazine, which was done in the mid-fifties, and the tail piece from "Shadow of the Vulture".

I hope that you will enjoy the fine line of Roy Krenkel as much as I do.

-Tom Veilleux

a

folio

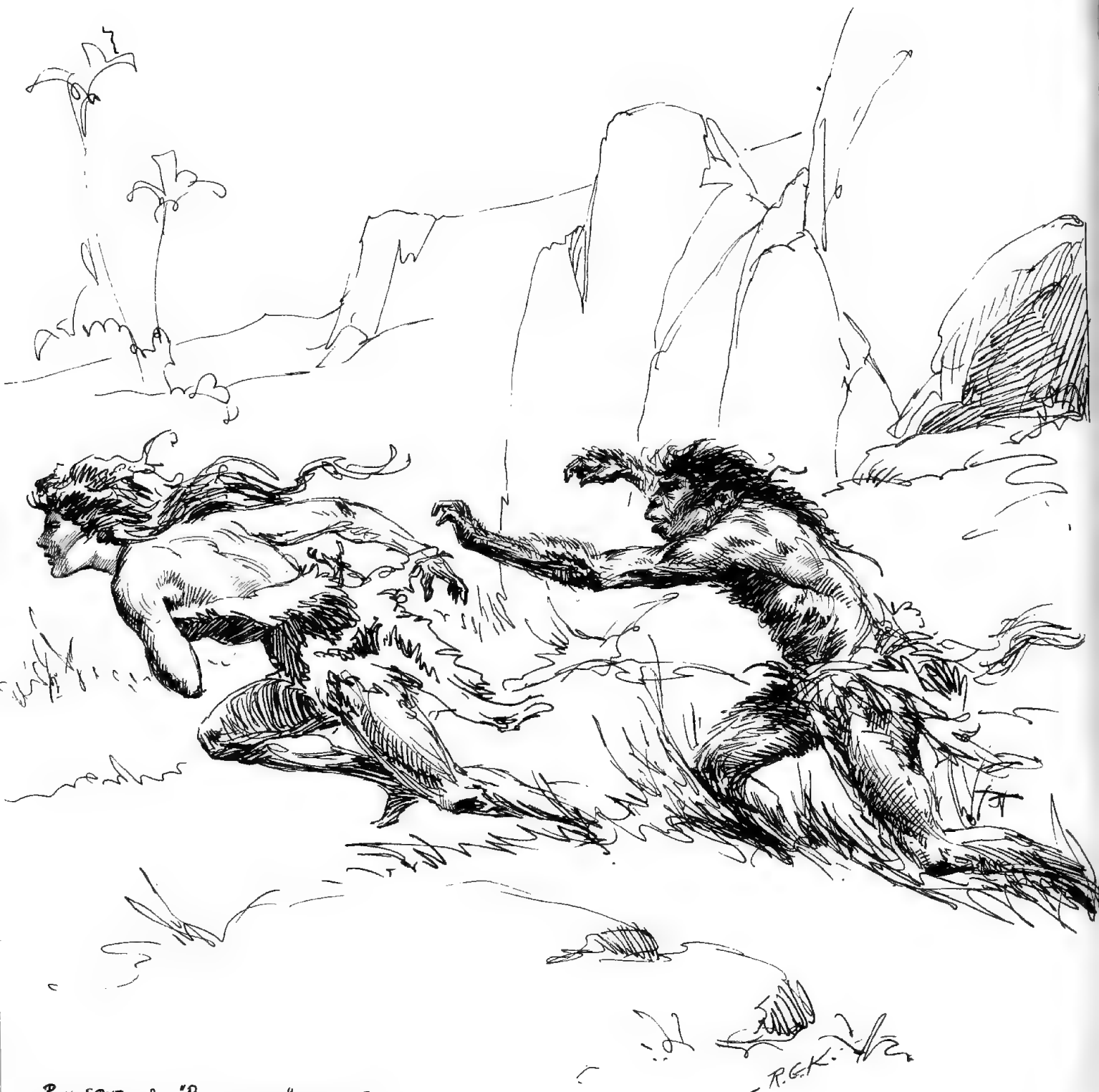
by

ROY

G.

KRENKEL

-R.G.K.-



– Pen study for "Pellucidar" subject —

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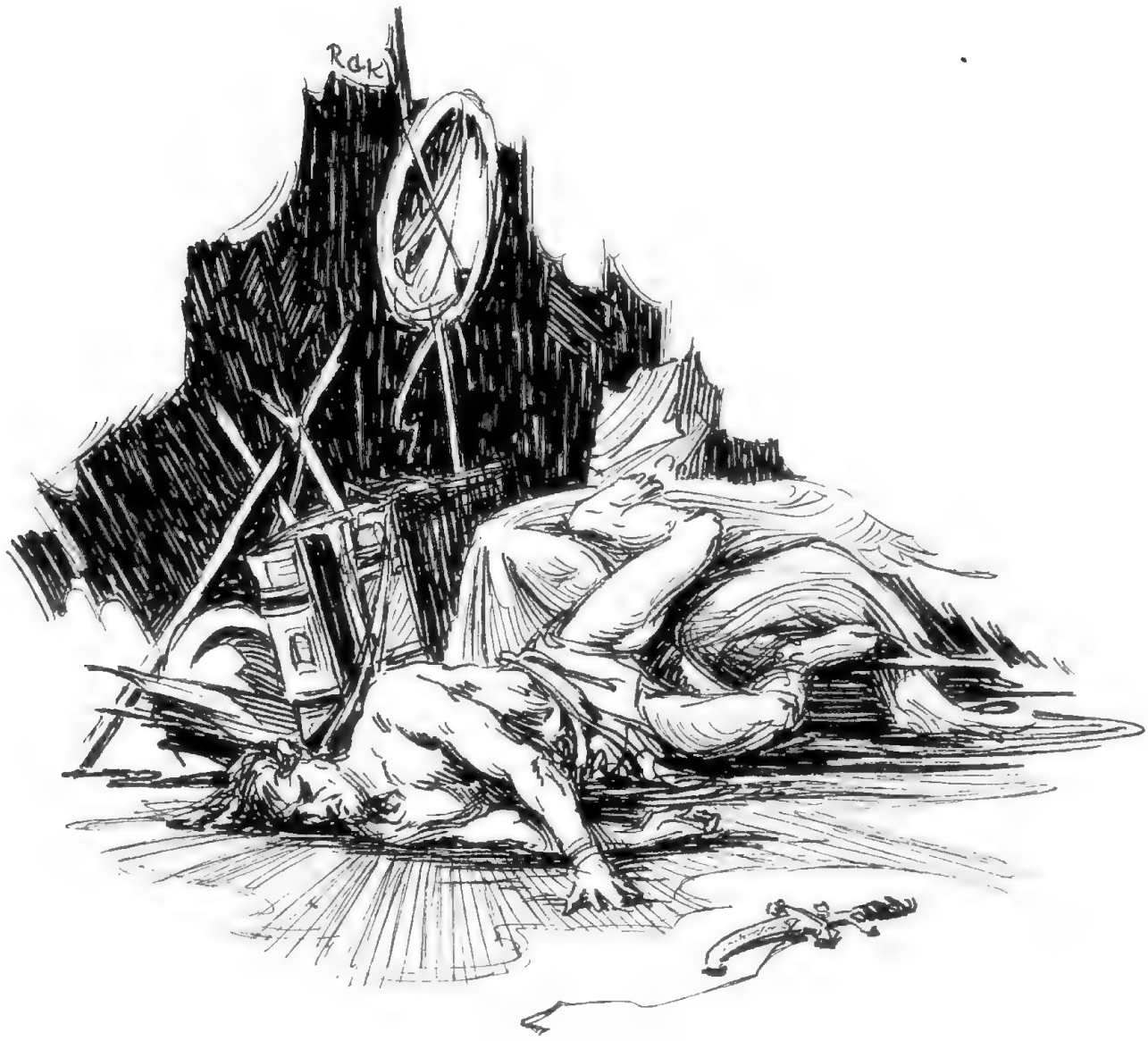
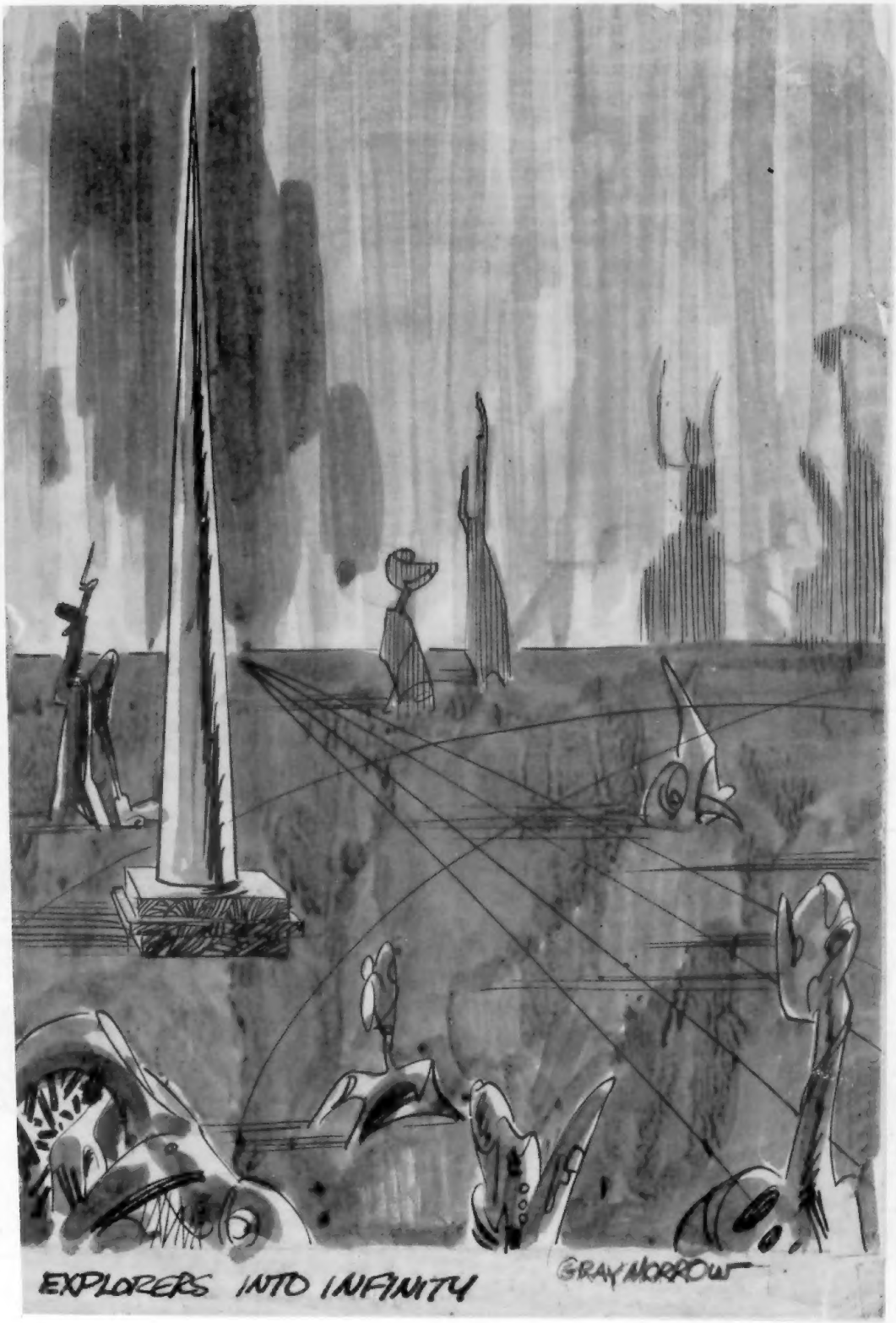


ROY G. KRENKEL

RGK
RGK
RGK

R.G.K.


EXPLORERS INTO INFINITY
GRAY MORROW